

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 473

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 8216

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELTN, CO

SUBJECT: LOPEZ STATE VISIT; ISSUES IN THE PAN AMERICAN  
HIGHWAY FMD CONTROL PROGRAM

### 1. SUMMARY:

THE MISSION HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED AN INTERNAL  
REVIEW OF THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY (DARIEN GAP) FOOT AND MOUTH  
DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMS. OUR CONCLUSION IS THAT THINGS ARE  
NOT GOING WELL AND THAT WE SHOULD UTILIZE PRESIDENT LOPEZ  
STATE VISIT TO PROPOSE A HIGH-LEVEL JOINT REVIEW TO SORT  
OUT THE ISSUES AND THE OPTIONS.

2. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE CONSTRUCTION ON THE DARIEN  
GAP SECTOR OF THE PAN AMERICAN HIGHWAY IN COLOMBIA HAS BEEN  
FROZEN PENDING SATISFACTORY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT  
US / COLOMBIAN FMD CONTROL PROGRAM. A RECENTLY COMPLETED  
MISSION REVIEW OF THE SITUATION HAS REVEALED A NUMBER OF  
DIFFICULT SHORT AND LONG-TERM PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE HIGH-LEVEL  
CONSIDERATION AND DECISION IN BOTH GOVERNMENTS. WE HAVE FOR  
EXAMPLE NOT YET AGREED ON SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO DETERMINE  
WHAT WOULD CONSTITUTE "SATISFACTORY" IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FMD  
PROGRAM AND PERMIT HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION TO PROCEED.  
THE GOC IMPLEMENTING AGENCY ICA APPEARS TO BE IN A STATE  
OF ADMINISTRATIVE CHAOS AND THERE IS A QUESTION AS TO  
WHETHER IT IS WILLING OR ABLE TO MAKE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO  
THE COSTS OF THIS PROGRAM. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN, BUT WE DOUBT  
WHETHER THE GOC HAS STUDIED THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE  
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LONGER-TERM COSTS INVOLVED IN MAINTAINING THE HIGHWAY

AND THE FMD PROGRAM WE ARE NOT EVEN CERTAIN AT THIS STAGE WHETHER PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND THE HIGHER ECHELONS OF THE GOC HAVE A REAL INTEREST IN COMPLETION OF THE HIGHWAY ALTHOUGH OUR PRESQPTION IS THAT THEY DO. IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO CONSIDER SOME ALTERNATE PLAN, SUCH AS COMPLETING A HIGHWAY TO THE CARIBBEAN COAST AND ESTABLISHING A FERRY CONNECTION TO PANAMA.

3. IN VIEW OF THESE MANY ISSUES AND UNCERTAINTIES, WE SUGGEST THAT THE HIGHWAY/FMD PROGRAM BE RAISED BY THE US SIDE DURING PRESIDENT LOPEZ VISIT AND THAT WE PROPOSE FORMATION OF A JOINT HIGH-LEVEL GROUP TO STAFF OUT THE PROGRAM FROM TOP TO BOTTOM INCLUDING BASIC OBJECTIVES, ALTERNATIVES AND COSTS, SO THAT ON THE BASIS OF SOME SYSTEMATIC IDEA OF THE COST CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROJECT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS CAN DECIDE WHAT TO DO.

4. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH THIS PROPOSAL PLEASE LET US KNOW SOONEST SO THE AMBASSADOR RWN INFORM THE GOC THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO PLACE THE ITEM ON THE AGENDA.

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## Message Attributes

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